

The University of Chicago

THE SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY OF
WILLIAM PENN

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE
FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE SOCIAL
SCIENCES IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY
1936

By
EDWARD CORBYN OBERT BEATTY

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Chapter I

THE BACKGROUND OF A PHILOSOPHY

The great business of man's life is to answer the end for which he lives; and that is to glorify God and save his own soul: this is the decree of Heaven, as old as the world.

—WILLIAM PENN

WILLIAM PENN was born on October 14, 1644.¹ He began life in an era of profound historical significance. Four years after his birth the negotiators at Osnabrück and Münster brought to an end the last and greatest European war of religion. Sectarian lines on the Continent had hardened and the boundaries between Catholic South and Protestant North now seemed relatively stable. Ravaged by a quarter of a century of military campaigning, the Germanies were emerging in economic ruin, social decay, and political disintegration, doomed for two hundred years to be the prey of the dynastic rivalries of Habsburg, Bourbon, Bonaparte, and Hohenzollern. The military defeat at Rocroi had destroyed the legendary invincibility of the Spanish infantry and symbolized the political and economic decline of Spain. With the death of Richelieu and the accession to power of Mazarin, France was passing into the era of domestic disorder which preceded the great days of the Bourbon monarchy. When Penn was born, Grotius and Descartes were drawing toward the close of their careers; Pufendorf and Spinoza were boys of twelve. In the British Isles John Milton had just written his *Areopagitica*, and Roger Williams, returned to the land of his fathers, had completed *The Bloody Tenent of Persecution*. Thomas Hobbes and James Harrington were yet to see printed their greatest works, and John Locke had still to reach his fourteenth birthday. In 1643 the Solemn League and Covenant had bound Scotch Presbyterian

¹ Hull, *William Penn: A Topical Biography*, p. 65. Where there is important difference of opinion among the biographers of Penn upon a point material to this study, that fact will be indicated in a note. I have usually followed Dr. Hull, the most recent biographer.

and English Independent in a military alliance against Stuart absolutism and Anglican ecclesiasticism. On July 2, 1644, Marston Moor had been fought. Prophets of new heavens and portents of a new earth were at hand.

The Penns appear to have been yeomen risen to the status of country gentry, who at one time had had considerable landed property. Later generations fell upon evil days, and the Quaker's grandfather, Giles, took to the sea. The son of Giles, William, followed his father's profession, entered the royal navy, and in his twenties had already won respectable rank in the king's service. He supported the cause of Parliament in the strife with Charles I, and at one time during the war the former officer in the royal navy commanded the Parliamentary squadron sent in pursuit of Prince Rupert. From the second Stuart and his son (after the Restoration), as well as from Oliver Cromwell, Admiral Penn received estates in Ireland. Some of these lands were later forfeited to the government as punishment or exchanged for other grants as rewards to the naval officer. Penn and Venables led an unsuccessful expedition to conquer Hispaniola for the Protector. The seizure of Jamaica for England did not offset their failure, and on their return they were imprisoned for a time by Cromwell. Later Penn espoused the Stuart cause and took a leading part in restoring the exiled Prince of Wales to the throne of his father. As a reward Charles II knighted the sailor.²

Much less is known with regard to Penn's maternal ancestry. Biographers agree that his mother was the widow of Nicasius van der Scure, Vanderscure, or Van der Schuren,³ a Dutchman, and the daughter of one John Jasper, said to have been a merchant of Rotterdam. Samuel Pepys, who was a neighbor and on terms of some familiarity with the Penns during the young manhood of William the Quaker, called Mrs. Penn a "Dutchwoman."⁴

² For biographies of Sir William Penn see such works as: Granville Penn, *Memorials of the Professional Life and Times of Sir William Penn, Knight*; Webb, *The Penns & Peningtons of the Seventeenth Century*; Jenkins, *The Family of William Penn*; Conner, *Sir William Penn, Knight, Admiral, and General-at-Sea*; Pound, *The Penns of Pennsylvania and England*.

³ Hull, *Eight First Biographies of William Penn*, p. 123. Some biographers give the Christian name of Mrs. Penn's first husband as Nicholas instead of Nicasius.

⁴ Pepys, *Diary and Correspondence*, III, 32-33 (entry for Aug. 19, 1664). Admiral Penn figures largely, though not usually admirably, in Pepys's diary.

Some of Penn's biographers have followed the diarist in asserting that William's mother was of Dutch origin; others have said that she was Anglo-Irish. Albert Cook Myers, the collector of the writings of William Penn, declared in 1908 that no record had been discovered of a John Jasper in Rotterdam "for the first half of the seventeenth century." There is evidence, however, that a John Jasper and his family resided in County Clare, Ireland, before 1641 and that by that year a daughter, Margaret, had been married to Nicasius Vanderscure. Dr. Myers stated in 1934 that Penn had "a Dutch mother"; and this view is held by Penn's most recent biographer, Professor William I. Hull.⁵ The lady, under the style of Margaret Van der Schuren, widow, was married on June 6, 1643, to Captain William Penn.⁶

The Admiral, desirous that his son play an honorable part in the world, provided quite unusual schooling for him. From the Penn country home at Wanstead, in Essex, the boy was sent to the grammar school at Chigwell, where both Greek and Latin—as well as writing and arithmetic—were taught. It was at Chigwell that the boy is reputed to have experienced, in his twelfth year, the religious emotion which was to influence so deeply his subsequent career. Soon afterward he was withdrawn from this school, sent to a private institution on Tower Hill in London near the city home of the family, and provided by his father with a private instructor.

Young Penn entered Oxford in October, 1660, a few days before he was sixteen, as "a gentleman commoner at Christchurch." John Locke and Christopher Wren were at the University at this time, but whether Penn then knew or associated with either or both of them is not known. It is recorded that in later years he was acquainted with Locke and that he once sought to

⁵ Hull, *William Penn: A Topical Biography*, p. 26. See Myers, "Was William Penn a 'Half-Dutchman'?" *Journal of the Friends' Historical Society*, V (1908), 118. The same author published an article in almost the same words in *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, XXXII (1908), 107-108. See also the report of Dr. Myers's radio address of Oct. 24, 1934, in "Notes and Queries," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LIX (1935), 91-93. Compare Clarkson, *Memoirs of the Private and Public Life of William Penn*, I, 5; Janney, *The Life of William Penn*, p. 2; Graham, *William Penn*, pp. 14, 15; Brailsford, *The Making of William Penn*, pp. 11-12; Dobree, *William Penn*, p. 2; Vulliamy, *William Penn*, p. 28. The latest account is Myers, *William Penn's Early Life*, pp. 20-21.

⁶ Hist. MSS Com., 13th Report, App., Part II, Portland MSS, II, 84.

obtain a pardon for him. Penn's biographers make numerous references to his career at Oxford, but their remarks are too general and too vague to yield much satisfactory information as to what he actually did there. Penn himself made little enlightening comment on his life at Oxford, though later he referred to the University in most scathing terms.⁷ While in residence there, he may have heard the Quaker preacher, Thomas Loe, who at Cork in 1667 was to persuade Penn finally to accept the doctrines of the Friends. Whether as a result of this man's teaching or of Puritanism or Presbyterianism acquired elsewhere, he was involved in a rebellion against enforced attendance at common prayer. He may have participated in a riot in which some members of the University garbed in the surplices then recently prescribed by the authorities were roughly handled.⁸ At any rate, he was expelled or suspended from the University and returned home on March 16, 1662.

During the greater part of 1662 and 1663 William Penn was in France, at Paris and Saumur, sent thither by his father to complete his education and, biographers think, to correct his pietistic tendencies. He came under the influence at Saumur of Moise Amyraut, the learned Calvinist. He read there the early Christian writers, developed his knowledge of theology, and perfected his command of French. Continuing the "Grand Tour," he made a journey to Italy early in 1664 but had just reached Turin when he was recalled to manage his father's affairs while Sir William was preoccupied with naval preparations for the Dutch war.

Penn enrolled on February 7, 1665, for a year of study in the law at Lincoln's Inn. This work was interrupted the following spring by about a month of naval service with his father. The young man, apparently, was not exposed to the more serious dangers of actual battle with the Dutch. Likewise he escaped the

⁷ "Truth Exalted," *A Collection of the Works of William Penn* (1726), I, 243. This collection will be cited hereafter as *Works*.

⁸ "The Convincement of William Penn," *Jour. of the Friends' Hist. Soc.*, XXXII (1935), 23. This article is the printed copy of the Huntley MS of High Wycombe used by Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-180. This document states that Penn was at Oxford until "he was expelled for writing a book the priests did not like. . . ." Hull, *William Penn: A Topical Biography*, p. 77, to whom I am indebted for the reference, thinks it unlikely that Penn wrote a book or pamphlet at that time for which he was dismissed. See also Myers, *William Penn's Early Life*, p. 27.

far graver menace of the "Great Plague," which raged in London during the summer following the victory of Lowestoft. The time Penn devoted to the study of law was well spent. His legal vocabulary—later so useful in pleading his own case before hostile magistrates, in contending for such historic rights of Englishmen as that of trial by jury and the security of property from arbitrary seizure, in drafting constitutions for two colonies—must have been the result of his studies in English law. Penn's earlier protests against religious persecution are rich with citations from Bracton, Fortescue, and Coke. Throughout a contentious life he was always ready with legal and historical precedent.

Early in 1666 Admiral Penn sent his son to his Irish estate at Shangarry.⁹ The young man's duties there were not only to develop the property but to manage a suit at law involving a disputed title. William Penn spent more than a year on this first visit in charge of his father's lands and succeeded in obtaining legal title to the property. He returned to Ireland later during the Admiral's lifetime not only to supervise the estates of the family but, now as a resolute Quaker, to uphold the cause of the persecuted Irish Friends. He visited Ireland repeatedly in subsequent years, and the Irish properties were a valuable source of income to him in the closing decades of his life.¹⁰ Penn learned in Ireland the management of country estates, and he learned to appreciate and to share in a measure the point of view of the country gentleman.

Penn's acceptance of the doctrines of George Fox in Ireland during his first visit there was a decisive step in his life. By September, 1667, he had been committed to jail for attending a Quaker meeting. He avowed himself an adherent of the despised sect soon after that imprisonment, the first of a series which he was to suffer. His disappointed father drove him from home, but after repeated reconciliation and renewed estrangement the Admiral seems on his deathbed to have accepted his son's conversion to Quakerism as irrevocable. In 1668, the year following his acceptance of the new faith, William Penn wrote and had pub-

⁹ Sir William Penn to the Marquis of Ormonde, Feb. 8, 1666, Hist. MSS Com., 6th Report, Part I, Report and Appendix, *Ormonde MSS*, p. 726.

¹⁰ Hull, *William Penn: A Topical Biography*, pp. 79, 88-105.

lished his first book, known by the abbreviated title of *Truth Exalted*,¹¹ in which he attacked "all those religions, faiths, and worships that have been formed and followed in the darkness of apostacy," including Roman Catholicism, Anglicanism, and the ritualism of other Protestant sects. From this time on Penn wrote voluminously, until by the close of his literary life in 1712 he had written one hundred and fifty-seven published books, treatises, and prefaces, introductions, or other articles.¹² Most of these writings were devoted to the exposition or defense of the doctrines of the Friends, to religious controversy, and to the good life.

The new faith animating William Penn was essentially an attempt to return to the ancient Christianity.¹³ George Fox's *Journal* contains many arguments for greater simplicity in religion and for the usages of the primitive church as opposed to the doctrine of priestly mediation between God and man. In his essay on "The Basis of Quaker Morality" Isaac Sharpless summarizes the Quaker doctrines under three main principles: the supremacy of the individual conscience, the belief in a moral order as opposed to utilitarianism, and the importance of faithfulness in small details.¹⁴ These three principles are revealed repeatedly in the writings of William Penn.

The extraordinary relationship existing between him and the Stuart monarchs, Charles II and, particularly, James II, must also have contributed to the development of his social philosophy. Inheriting from his father the friendship of the royal brothers, he became an even more trusted confidant and servant of James II than his father had been of Charles II. Penn's biographers record from contemporary accounts that the Founder of Pennsylvania was for years an influential figure at court. Unfriendly historians from Burnet to Macaulay and others have presented the Quaker as a confidential, almost sycophantic, agent of James and have even cast upon him suspicion of plotting to restore his royal patron to the English throne after the Revo-

¹¹ *Works*, I, 241-247. See Myers, *William Penn's Early Life*, p. 40.

¹² Spence, *William Penn: A Bibliography*, p. 3, quoting Myers, *Proposed Plan for the Publication of the Complete Works of William Penn* (1910), pp. 1-2.

¹³ Jones, *The Faith and Practice of the Quakers*, p. 36.

¹⁴ Sharpless, *Quakerism and Politics*, pp. 202-220.

lution of 1688-1689. There is ample evidence to show that Penn was a figure of consequence, on terms of some intimacy with the great and powerful at Whitehall during the reign of James II.¹⁵ In the time of William III his influence ebbed at the court, but his standing was to a large extent restored after the accession of Anne. Penn used his position to serve as patron for a large clientele. The effects of these experiences near the seat of power upon his philosophy are difficult to estimate with precision; but they may account in part, with advancing age and disillusionment, for the increasing conservatism of his views as the final years approached.

The influence of the political writings of such men as John Milton, James Harrington, Algernon Sidney, and John Locke upon Penn is not easily determined. Penn's original scheme for the government of Pennsylvania suggests strongly that he was acquainted with Harrington's theories.¹⁶ He supported Sidney in two campaigns for election to the House of Commons and took counsel with him in the preparation of the First Frame of Government for Pennsylvania. Sidney's biographer asserts that his

¹⁵ The complete story of the relations between James II and William Penn has not yet been made clear. For serious charges against Penn's character, linking him closely and even treasonably with the Jacobite party in England during and after the Glorious Revolution, see the strongly partisan Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second*, II, 94-97, 257-258, 266, Appendix; III, 78, 97, 169-171, Appendix; V, 389-390, 402-403, 538-539; VI, 35-36, 41-44. For an example of the sort of evidence which has raised doubts in some minds as to the integrity of Penn's conduct at the time of the overthrow of James II, see the so-called "Information of John Lunt, gentleman," said to have been sworn to by John Lunt on June 27, 1694, in *Hist. MSS Com., 14th Report*, App., Part IV, *Kenyon MSS*, p. 292, note 1, and p. 294. Dixon, *A History of William Penn*, pp. vii-viii, reports in a statement published posthumously that Lord Macaulay, moved perhaps by the vigorous replies to his charges against the Quaker, changed his mind in later years about some of his earlier allegations. For answers to Macaulay, see Dixon, *William Penn: An Historical Biography*, pp. 338-353; *ibid.* (later edition, London, 1856), pp. xx-xxii, xxiv-xxix; Forster, *William Penn and Thomas B. Macaulay*; Paget, *An Inquiry into the Evidence Relating to the Charges Brought by Lord Macaulay against William Penn*; Paget, *The New "Examen,"* pp. 147-222; Tyson, "An Examination of the Various Charges Brought by Historians against William Penn, Both as a Man and as a Political Governor," *Hist. Soc. of Pa., Memoirs*, Vol. II, Part II, pp. 127-157; Descours, "William Penn's Vindication," *The Positivist Review*, XXVI (1918), 229-232. Graham, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-313, has a review of the various refutations of Macaulay. See also Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, pp. 302-306. Still more recent is Hull, *William Penn: A Topical Biography*, pp. 241-278, 321.

¹⁶ Russell-Smith, *Harrington and His Oceana*, pp. 156, 167, 170-171, 175-182. Compare Gooch, *English Democratic Ideas in the Seventeenth Century*, pp. 305-307.

subject was the author of the "remodelled draft" of this famous document and assumes, in effect, that the constitution was chiefly, if not entirely, the work of Sidney: it was an analysis, he wrote, of the latter's "political opinions, and of the system of administration he considered most calculated for the promotion of liberty and good government."¹⁷ Under date of October 13, 1681, however, Penn wrote Sidney a letter which indicates clearly that in some particulars he had not followed the latter's advice about the Frame but gives no information as to the extent to which he had made use of the other's ideas.¹⁸ No evidence known to me proves any certain connection between Penn's ideas and those of either Milton or Locke. The Quaker's efforts to secure a pardon for Locke, like his participation in Sidney's campaigns for Parliament, may indicate that in some respects they were kindred spirits but do not prove that he derived his philosophy from either. Benjamin Furly, the "international Quaker," offered Penn some advice with reference to the First Frame and wrote to the Founder expressing his disapproval of the draft which the latter had substituted for an earlier scheme favored by Furly. His disapproval seems to have been based on the conviction that pressure, perhaps from a "few corrupt and guilty courtiers," had forced Penn to recede from the position of advanced democracy which, Furly thought, characterized the supplanted draft.¹⁹ Penn was willing to take advice, but he was also willing to reject it.

Many of William Penn's writings reveal great erudition. His theological tracts are full of citations from the Scriptures and from the patristic writings. He frequently drew upon the pagan philosophers and the historians of Greece and Rome and took arguments from foreign as well as from English history. In his tract *A Persuasive to Moderation to Church-Dissenters in Prudence and Conscience* ²⁰ he supported his contentions by reference to the annals

¹⁷ Ewald, *The Life and Times of the Hon. Algernon Sydney*, II, 198 ff. Gooch, *op. cit.*, p. 283, says: "The respective shares of the two authors [Penn and Sidney] in the Constitution of Pennsylvania may therefore be presumed to have been about equal." Gooch cites Ewald, but gives no other authority.

¹⁸ "Inedited Letters of William Penn," Hist. Soc. of Pa., *Memoirs*, Vol. III, Part I, pp. 285-286.

¹⁹ "B. F. Abridgement out of Holland and Germany," Penn MSS, Ford vs. Penn; Hull, *William Penn and the Dutch Quaker Migration to Pennsylvania*, pp. 342-345; Hull, *Benjamin Furly (1636-1714) and Quakerism in Rotterdam*.

²⁰ *Works*, II, 727-749.

of the Jewish, Roman, Dutch, Polish, French, and German peoples; he pointed with approval to the political organization of Venice, Genoa, Lucca, and the Swiss cantons; he invoked the authority of Quadratus, Aristides, Justin Martyr, Melito, Tertullian, Hilary, Atticus, Proclus, Socrates the historian, Lactantius, John Chrysostom, Jerome, Constantius (father of Constantine the Great), Constantine, Eusebius, Pamphilus, King Stephen of Poland, the King of Bohemia, and the English monarchs, James I and Charles I. One of his doctrinal works bears the title *A Treatise of Oaths, Containing Several Weighty Reasons Why the People Called Quakers Refuse to Swear, and Those Confirmed by Numerous Testimonies of Gentiles, Jews and Christians, Both Fathers, Doctors and Martyrs*.²¹ True to the description, this heavy treatise is full of arguments against swearing offered in a formidable array of citations from more than one hundred and fifteen separate authorities, as diverse as Plato, Polybius, Epictetus, Plutarch, Marcus Aurelius, Augustine, Jerome, Chrysostom, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Maimonides, Chaucer, Wycliffe, John Huss, Erasmus, Peter Martyr, Grotius, and Bishop Ussher.

Writing in 1693 to a young Quaker friend,²² Penn listed the books "most valuable for a moderate library." It would seem fair to suppose that, even if he had not read all of the books in the lengthy list sent his correspondent, he included those which seemed to him the most useful and which, therefore, probably influenced his thinking. Among the works and authors recommended were the Bible, with a number of writings on theological or doctrinal subjects, such as Augustine's *City of God*, Eusebius, Thomas à Kempis, "Friends' Books"; Thucydides, Tacitus, Seneca, Plutarch, Marcus Aurelius; Machiavelli, Sir Thomas More, Sir Francis Bacon, Grotius, and Sir Edward Coke. Among the interesting omissions are the names of Bodin, Harvey, Hobbes, Descartes, Spinoza, Harrington, Locke, Pufendorf, and Newton. Algernon Sidney's name was not in the list of Penn's recommended authors, but his *Discourses Concerning Government* was not published until 1698. If it be assumed that Penn's list of valuable

²¹ *Ibid.*, I, 612-672.

²² Penn to Sir John Rodes, October, 1693, in *A Quaker Post-Bag*, edited by Mrs. Locker-Lampson, pp. 3-7.

books was deliberately prepared and that he knew the works of some or all of these omitted authors, one must conclude that for the general reader he placed a lower value upon their contributions than upon those of the writers whose names he listed. One may ask, indeed, why Harrington was omitted when Machiavelli and Sir Thomas More were included. Similar questions might be raised, of course, as to other names.

Penn's political writings evince abundant information concerning legal and constitutional history. In *England's Present Interest Considered*²³ he drew references from Caesar, Tacitus, Matthew Paris, Bede, the Chronicle of Lichfield, Magna Charta, the laws of such monarchs as Alfred, William I, Stephen, and Edward I, the writings of Coke, Grotius, and others. In *The Excellent Privilege of Liberty and Property* Penn reprinted the Great Charter with a comment thereupon, the royal confirmation of the "Charter of the Liberties of England and of the Forest," the sentence of the clergy against the breakers of those articles, the curse of the bishops against the violators of the Great Charter, the statute of Edward I known as *De tallagio non concedendo* and comment, as well as the Charter of 1681 granting Penn his province and the Frame of Government of 1683 for Pennsylvania.

In spite of his important role in the political life of his own country and her American colonies, William Penn was primarily a religionist rather than a philosopher or a politician. Much the greater part of his published writings deals primarily with theology, religion, and morality. Some are expositions of the Quaker "way of life." Of them the most widely known and most important is *No Cross, No Crown*.²⁴ Others bear such titles as *Tender Counsel and Advice*; *A Discourse of the General Rule of Faith and Practice*, and *Judge of Controversy*; *A Brief Account of the Rise and Progress of the People Called Quakers*; *A Key, Opening the Way to Every Capacity, How to Distinguish the Religion Professed by the People Called Quakers, from the Perversions and Misrepresentations of Their Adversaries*; *Primitive Christianity Revived*; and *A Defence of a Paper, Entitled Gospel-Truths, against the Exceptions of the Bishop of Cork's Testimony*.²⁵ A

²³ *Works*, I, 672-705.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 272-439.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 198-209, 591-608, 858-892; II, 778-791, 853-875, 884-916.

second group of writings concerned with religion, of lesser importance and interest today, is polemical. Judged by modern standards, these tracts seem violent in tone and frequently even offensive to good taste. A third group is made up of literary works dealing primarily with maxims of conduct rather than with theological doctrines or controversy. The best example is *Some Fruits of Solitude in Reflections and Maxims*.²⁶ For this book Penn adopted a style reminiscent of the language in the Book of Proverbs or of the *Encheiridion* of Epictetus. In many series of numbered comments he aphoristically expressed his views on such subjects as "Education of Children," "Servant," "Government," "The Conformist," and others.

Penn was thoroughly acquainted with the Bible. He frequently enriched his writings with Scriptural quotations and usually added to the title page of his tract a series of Biblical verses. In *The Sandy Foundation Shaken*,²⁷ for example, after announcing himself to be "a builder on that foundation which cannot be moved," he cited three passages from Holy Writ: I Cor. 8:6; Micah 7:18; and Exod. 23:7. Quotations appear on the title page of the *Discourse of the General Rule of Faith and Practice* from Gal. 6:16; I Cor. 2:10, 11, and 15; and I John 2:20. Two citations from Proverbs introduce *Innocency with Her Open Face*.²⁸ Penn, like other writers of his day, sometimes varied this method of presenting texts for his sermons by adding a statement of his own to the title page, in which undeniable reference to Biblical passages is made. Thus, after the title of *Truth Exalted* he wrote, in apposition to his own name as author, "whom Divine love constrains in an holy contempt, to trample on Egypt's glory, not fearing the King's wrath, having beheld the majesty of Him who is invisible."

The supreme written source of William Penn's ideas was the Bible. He expressly recommended it, and particularly the Old Testament, to young Sir John Rodes for the study of politics. His own political writings make frequent appeals to Scriptural

²⁶ *Ibid.*, I, 818-858. These maxims have been reprinted many times. References to them made hereafter in this study are cited from Penn, *Fruits of Solitude: Reflections and Maxims Relating to the Conduct of Human Life* (11th edition, reprinted; Chicago, 1906).

²⁷ *Works*, I, 248-266.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 266-271.

authority. His policies as a statesman and as a colonial administrator were often based on the patriarchal authoritarianism of the Old Testament or on the Christian humanitarianism of the New.

Penn's literary style is capable of much variety. He is said, on at least two occasions, to have written poetry. The earlier poem was a Latin elegy on the death of the Duke of Gloucester, younger brother of Charles II, composed by Penn as a student in his first year at Oxford.²⁹ The second was an English stanza to a little girl, translated by Willem Sewel into Dutch, printed by Dr. Hull in his recent study of the biographies of Penn.³⁰ Penn usually eschewed entirely the poetic manner, but nevertheless his style exhibits remarkable range in character. In some of his theological arguments he is verbose and difficult to follow; in his maxims he frequently approaches an admirable terseness. At times his language is serene and dignified; at others his tone is almost strident in its violence. By turns he is humble and submissive, assertive and belligerent. His reasoning is almost always a priori. He frequently uses the syllogistic method. Sometimes his remarks upon Scriptural authority have a distinctly modern note. In his *Discourse of the General Rule of Faith and Practice*, for example, his position is not out of harmony with that set forth in the Biblical criticism of some of the more liberal writers of the present day. At other times Penn is a fundamentalist. In some of his controversial writings his reasoning is well-knit and logical, but in others he rationalizes his prejudices like the most untrained partisan. He is tolerant on some occasions far beyond his age; he is quite as dogmatic at other times as any of those whom he denounces.

William Penn's political and economic ideas were affected by factors which were themselves the results of his peculiar environment. His early instruments of government for New Jersey and for Pennsylvania, drawn up when he was contending for the recognition of the rights of an oppressed people to religious toleration, exhibited a marked degree of political liberality. This struggle for the right of his sect to freedom from persecution on account of religion gave rise, in large measure, to such democratic tenden-

²⁹ Hull, *William Penn: A Topical Biography*, p. 74 and note 164, quoting Clarkson, *op. cit.*, I, 7-8.

³⁰ Hull, *Eight First Biographies of William Penn*, p. 34.

cies as may be attributed to Penn.³¹ When he found himself in the position of a landed proprietor, in some respects a feudal lord, and the grantor or master of great estates, he developed the characteristic conservatism of vested interests. At the same time, to the antagonisms generated by conflicting needs and purposes of proprietor and colonists were added the pressures that came from the former's relationship to the Crown and to the officers of the Crown in America. When, in recalling his early legal training, he found his rights or the rights of his sect denied, he struck for the liberty he claimed under the law. When, in his province, he found an "unruly" people bent upon what they termed "liberty" with no great appreciation for his vested rights, he stigmatized their activities as "licentious," and invoked the law in his own defense or in that of constituted authority. On one occasion he even wished to suspend arbitrarily what the colonists considered the provincial constitution.

During the early years of the eighteenth century Penn, disillusioned with his "holy experiment," wished to abandon it and salvage what he could of his investment, saving to the Quakers, however, their rights so hardly won. His disillusionment, combined with other bitter disappointments and cruel financial difficulties, induced in him such a state of mind that in the final decade of his active life philosophy gave way to futile and pathetic musings, perhaps prophetic of his approaching collapse. Yet until the disabling stroke of 1712 he never abandoned the old ideal of religious toleration; when he lost his faculties, he was still hoping one day to retire to Pennsylvania, where he thought he had helped to create a kindlier world.

³¹ Hull, *William Penn: A Topical Biography*, pp. 318, 328, attributes Penn's democracy and his labors for reform to Quakerism. Compare Tawney, *Religion and the Rise of Capitalism*, pp. 272-273.

EPILOGUE

The end of everything should direct the means. . . .

. . . . And, dear John,¹ I have often begrudged thee thy unactive life. The proverb is wise: Use legs and have them. Get abroad and mix with living friends and thou will feel an increase in thy bosom, and it will engage thee more in an universal spirit and general service. The Lord that found thee out and called thee intended thee other work than to spend thy youth, the cream of thy time, in a retired unconcerned silence. It does not fill up thy calling nor quality. Thy outward character as a man and thy service in the church are at too great a disproportion. We have bitter adversaries and want helpers. It were a fine introduction for thee. Many friends would be glad of thy company in their travails. I can say it was my delight, and I thought it my honor, to be admitted to such fellowship and service, and so will that eye and mind that sees and judges right.

*Your union is what I desire, but your peace and accommodation of one another is what I must expect from you. The reputation of it is something, the reality much more. And desire you to remember and observe what I say. Yield in circumstantial to preserve essentials; and being safe in one another, you will always be so in esteem with me. Make me not sad now I am going to leave you, since 'tis for you as for
Your friend, proprietor, and governor, W. P.*

WILLIAM PENN was by nature neither speculative nor scientific. He was not interested in building for any field of knowledge a systematic ideology. He made no pretense to the discovery of new truth. When he set forth principles to guide human action, he claimed no originality. His teachings proceeded from the eternal verities and could have been discerned by all men through the "inner light"; they were not new doctrines established and proclaimed by William Penn. If at times he was dogmatic, his dogmatism resulted rather from the trustful certainty of the convinced believer than from the self-assurance of the philosophic doctrinaire. He has, therefore, figured on the stage of history primarily in roles other than that of the philosopher.

Penn's printed works, numbering almost eight score titles, include books which have won fame in their own and later genera-

¹ Sir John Rodes of Barlbrough.

tions. Some have been reprinted many times. Several, particularly *An Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe* and *Fruits of Solitude*, have been republished in popular editions within the present century. A few of his earlier works bear some of the marks of scholarship. His most famous doctrinal writing, *No Cross, No Crown*, is heavily documented and rich with citations from many sources. Others follow the same model. These books evince wide acquaintance with the Scriptures, with theology, with the political and legal history of his own and other countries. They show also a lawyer's ability to marshal facts and apply evidence. Yet Penn has never won wide recognition as a scholar. Perhaps, to the worldly, his method has resembled more the documented, purposeful briefing practised by the advocate than the critical, impartial weighing of evidence characteristic of the scholar. Most of his writings are frankly and emphatically *tendenziös*. Plainly, his chief service to mankind is that neither of scholar nor of sage.

Penn is known as the fearless advocate of religious toleration for his own and other dissenting sects. To accomplish his purpose in England, as in America, he had to play the role of politician. Contrary to Quaker preachments and to his own maxims, he participated by speech and pamphlet in political controversy. He cultivated the friendship of the mighty, even when they possessed few virtues to commend them to his sect. Though he feared Catholic plots and propaganda, he suffered disgrace and persecution because of his intimate association with a devoutly Catholic monarch. In the end—nearly thirty years before his death—the Act of Toleration began the accomplishment of his ideal in England, an ideal which had still to wait more than a century for its complete fulfillment.

Penn's services as a Quaker preacher and missionary are perhaps no less important to the members of his sect than are his labors in behalf of religious toleration. Throughout a busy lifetime he taught in sermon and in essay the doctrines of the Friends. He is counted today with Fox and Ellwood, Penington and Barclay, among the principal exponents of the Quaker theology. Since one of the great principles of his religious faith was the immorality of international violence and force, his teachings

may, in the long course of history, conceivably be no less important to all men. When Europe was almost constantly distraught by dynastic and imperialistic wars, Penn expounded the possibility of universal peace. He set forth to an incredulous or indifferent world the proposition that peace must rest on justice. His own diplomatic activities in America demonstrated that wars may be avoided by a spirit of accommodation and compromise. His labors for the cause of pacifism have seemed to modern Friends of such lasting significance that one distinguished Quaker scholar presented a special edition of the *Essay towards the Present and Future Peace of Europe* to the Second Peace Conference at The Hague in 1907.

Penn stands forth as one of the founders of the first British Empire, the creator of one of the greatest of the United States, the designer of an American metropolis now rich in historic tradition. He is remembered as one who built a haven for those oppressed for conscience sake. He is honored by men of all opinions as an imperial statesman in whose relations with a subject race there is no evidence of violence, dishonesty, deceit, or conscious exploitation. He is admired as a political idealist who, in an undemocratic age, dared to write of government through laws made by the governed and who, in practice, permitted his colonists a comparatively large measure of political freedom.

It is less widely known that William Penn was interested, as were the greatest English statesmen of his day, in the economic development of the plantations. The founding of Pennsylvania was fundamentally an idealistic project, but Penn lamented often its failure to bring him material compensation. He sought through the traditional economics of his age to bring prosperity to his colony, to his settlers in America, and to himself. In some respects he was a mercantilist. Yet he saw on occasion through the eyes of the colonials and realized the shortsightedness of some of the British commercial policies. Throughout his life he respected the so-called rights of property, though he usually gave that term a wider meaning than is common today. He was an economic conservative if judged by standards of the present, but at times his methods were as paternalistic as are those of modern collectivism.

He feared *per se* neither private monopoly nor governmental regulation.

Less widely appreciated, too, is William Penn's part in the building of the English empire in America. Like later British and American statesmen, he faced that crucial problem of early American political history, the establishment of limited government in an efficient imperial order. His best-known contribution toward the solution of this problem is the plan of union for the colonies, largely (though he said not principally) designed as a defensive measure against the hostile French. Penn seems to have been the leading spirit in promoting the conference of provincial governors at New York in 1700. To develop colonial unity he carried on an intercolonial correspondence, a device which, under more favorable circumstances, was to bear substantial fruit three generations later. His policies concerning the Indians were sometimes deliberately planned to weaken the influence of the French and to substitute for it the economic and political domination of the English. As a colonial statesman William Penn exhibited no mean ability.

It was in his role of humanitarian that Penn demonstrated the greatest freedom from the practical considerations that warp the philosophy of men. He was, as such, not limited by the necessity of conforming to the exigencies of English or colonial politics, and not bound by distracting economic motives. His great enterprise in the New World was an endeavor to set up a social order blessed with religious toleration and controlled by humanitarian ideals. In this sense it was most genuinely "an holy experiment." Religion is the key to Penn's humanitarianism and to the political liberalism which characterized his earlier career. He was not a philosophic democrat, but he was a friend of man.

The impressive catalog of Penn's labors bespeaks a busy life. His achievements were the deeds of an active, versatile personality, endowed with great energy and force, rather than the meditations of the purely speculative thinker. Serenity was not his constant companion; if at times he was contemplative, his days were too full of distractions for the slow and painful formulation of a systematic philosophy. He was not gifted with that essential char-

acteristic of the seer, so well described by Matthew Arnold, the ability to see life steadily and to see it whole. He was fundamentally religious, and his reasoning was more often inspirational and *ex cathedra* than logical and inductive. By nature a controversialist, he regarded his professed principles rather as positions to be defended than as hypotheses to be examined. William Penn was more a man of faith and action than a man of thought.

His deeds were inspired by ideals and, hence, by a philosophy; but the deeds, in turn, conditioned the philosophy. Penn was concerned chiefly with the practical accomplishment of purposes which many men thought visionary. He could realize his ideals only by treating practically the human and material factors in the contemporary scene. He was, therefore, not disposed to adopt the detached attitude of the scientific observer; nor did he, like the mathematician, choose to look upon the universe *sub specie aeternitatis*. His philosophy was always dynamic and purposive.

As life itself not infrequently reveals little plan or pattern, so Penn's ideology often exhibits little internal consistency. Politician and practical statesman no less than preacher, he took the world as he found it, not as he wished it to be. In his career, as in the life of many realists, there was necessarily some opportunism. His ideology often rationalized his desires. His philosophy eventuated in action; but, in turn, the contemplated action bent the philosophy to its needs. "The end of everything should direct the means." William Penn was a pragmatist.

When he died on July 30, 1718, two groups oppressed by their contemporaries remembered that he had had principles. A meeting of Friends and a tribe of Indians recalled that William Penn had raised his voice for liberty and for justice.

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Abbreviations Used in Citations

The Acts of Assembly of Pennsylvania	The Acts of Assembly of the Province of Pennsylvania
Amer. Hist. Assoc. Annual Rept.	Annual Report of the American Historical Association
B. T. J.	Journal of the Board of Trade
B. T. P.	Papers of the Board of Trade
C. S. P.	Calendar of State Papers
Col. Rec.	Colonial Records, i.e., Minutes of the Provincial Council of Pennsylvania
Friends' Hist. Assoc., Bulletin	Bulletin of Friends' Historical Association
Hist. MSS Com.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
Hist. Soc. of Pa.	Historical Society of Pennsylvania
Jour. of the Friends' Hist. Soc.	Journal of the Friends' Historical Society
Letter Book, 1667-1675	William Penn's Letter Book, 1667-1675
Letter Book, 1699-1701	William Penn's Letter Book, 1699-1701
Penn MSS, X, Dom. & Misc. Letters	Penn Manuscripts, X, Domestic and Miscellaneous Letters
Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives	Votes and Proceedings of the House of Representatives of the Province of Pennsylvania

*WILLIAM PENN'S WRITINGS CITED
IN THIS BOOK*

*Manuscript*¹

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Etting Papers—Early Quakers and Penn Family.
Fallon Scrap Book.
Gratz Collection—Case 2, Box 33, Governors of Pennsylvania.
Huntington Manuscripts (Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery).
Logan Papers, Vols. I and III.
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 Domestic and Miscellaneous Letters.
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 Official Correspondence.
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 Private Correspondence.
Penn Papers
 Charters and Frame of Government.
 Deed Box.
 J. Francis Fisher's Copies.
 Miscellaneous Papers, Penn and Baltimore.
 Penn vs. Ford.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all manuscripts listed in this bibliography are in the library of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

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